

## Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 MCT-01 SSM-03 AID-05 IO-13 NEAE-00

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O R 021409Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9400

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBCDECT: SEPT. 1-2 MEDIA REPORT FAVORABLE ARAB REACTION  
TO SARKIS VISIT

1. SYRIAN MEDIA STRESSED FAVORABLE REACTION IN ARAB WORLD  
TO VISIT BY SARKIS TO DAMASCUS. PRESS HEADLINED: "LEBANESE  
PEOPLE WELCOME RESULTS OF SARKIS VISIT TO DAMASCUS.  
OPTIMISM CONCERNING EARLY RELAXATION OF CRISIS POLITICALLY  
AND MILITARILY PREVAILS IN LEBANESE CIRCLES. MEETING BETWEEN  
ASAD AND SARKIS RECEIVED ATTENTION OF ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL  
MEDIA. MEETING WAS POSITIVE STEP ON ROAD OF SETTLING LEBANESE  
CRISIS. RIAD CONTINUES HIS POLITICAL CONTACTS. ARAB FONMINS  
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WILL DISCUSS DATE AND PLACE OF FORTHCOMING SUMMIT." PRESS

REPORT ENDED WITH ASSERTION THAT LEBANESE MORE HOPEFUL  
OF SETTLEMENT IN WAKE OF VISIT.

2. FOLLOWING THREE SUCCESSIVE DAYS OF RELATIVE CALM IN  
BEIRUT REPORTED BY PRESS SEPT. 1, SEPT. 2 PRESS NOTED  
DETERIORATION IN SECURITY SITUATION MARKED BY ESCALATION  
OF CLASHES BETWEEN WARRING FACTIONS. EAST AND WEST BEIRUT  
TRADED ARTILLERY FIRE AND TRIPOLI-ZGHORTA FRONT SAW INCREASED  
MILITARY ACTIVITY WHICH LEFT NUMBER OF KILLED AND WOUNDED.  
SEPT. 1 PRESS OBSERVED THAT, "DESPITE HOPE FOR CONTINUATION  
OF CALM, THERE ARE THOSE WHO WORK FOR MILITARY ESCALATION.  
INFLUX OF IRAQI MERCENARIES TO SIDON AND TYRE BY SEA CONTINUES.  
ACCORDING TO OBSERVERS, 2,500 ARMED FIGHTERS HAVE ARRIVED IN  
PAST FEW DAYS."

3. MEDIA REPORTED MEETINGS IN BEIRUT BETWEEN ASF COMMANDER  
GHYNAYM AND PLO CHIEF YASIR ARAFAT IN WHICH LATTER WAS HANDED  
COPY OF AL PEACE PLAN. PLO AND PHALANGE REPS ALSO MET TO  
DISCUSS CEASFIRE IN MOUNTAINS. DR. KHULI REPORTEDLY DELAYING  
HIS RETURN TO BEIRUT UNTIL COMING WEEK.

4. ARAB FONMINS BEGAN ARRIVING IN CAIRO TO ATTEND SATURDAY'S  
EMERGENCY SESSION. PRESS CLAIMED AGENDA LIMITED TO ONE  
TOPIC--SETTING DATE AND PLACE OF ARAB SUMMIT--BUT ADDED THEY  
WILL DISCUSS LEBANESE SITUATION AND HEAR REPORT ON AL  
EFFORTS TO ARRANGE SETTLEMENT FROM SEC GEN RIAD.

5. PRESS CITED STATEMENT BY PRIMIN KARAME STRONGLY  
CRITICIZING ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES  
BY JUMBLATT FORCES.

6. PRESS HAS DEVOTED LENGTHY SPACE TO INTERVIEWS WITH  
LEBANESE EVACUEES WHO RECENTLY RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES IN  
NABAA. AL-THAWRAH CLAIMED THAT THEIR RETURN SIGNALS  
BEGINNING OF THE END FOR PARTITION PLOT.

7. SEPT. 2 PRESS PUBLISHED SANA RELEASE CLAIMING ISRAELI  
FORCES HAD LAUNCHED "NEW AGGRESSION" AGAINST SOUTH LEBANON  
PREVIOUS DAY. IDF ALLEGEDLY SHELLED VILLAGES OF BINT  
JUBAYL AND JABAL AL-DIB.  
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8. SEPT. 1 AL-BAATH COLUMNIST REITERATED SYRIAN DESIRE  
TO END LEBANESE CRISIS QUICKLY TO PREVENT MORE KILLING  
AND PARTITION OF LEBANON. HE ADDED THAT SYRIAN NATIONAL  
SECURITY WOULD BE EXPOSED TO MILITARY THREAT IF ISRAEL  
FOUND IN SOUTH LEBANON MILITARY VACUUM WHICH IT MIGHT  
BE TEMPTED TO OCCUPY. ANOTHER COLUMNIST ASSERTED THAT  
SARKIS VISIT MARKED END OF CYCLE OF CONTACTS WITH WARRING

FACTIONS. COLUMNIST STATED MEETINGS WITH PLO AND LEBANESE PRIOR TO SARKIS VISIT AIMED AT REVIVING TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH PREVIOUS SYRIAN INITIATIVES AND APPLYING THEM IN LIGHT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. HE NOTED THAT THESE DELEGATIONS HAD PRESENTED THEIR VIEWS AND DAMASCUS HAS LISTENED CAREFULLY. "DIALOGUE LED TO COMPREHENSIVE ACCORD ON SOME ISSUES AND CONFORMITY OF OPINION ON OTHERS. FOR EXAMPLE, ALL AGREED THAT RESORT TO FORCE FOR VICTORY NO LONGER POSSIBLE IN LEBANON." WRITER SAID THAT MEETINGS WITH PLO AND LEBANESE DELEGATIONS PROMPTED DAMASCUS TO INVITE SARKIS FOR DISCUSSIONS, JUST AS LAST FEB. FRANGIE CAME AND REACHED AGREEMENT ON CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENT. HE CONCLUDED BY WARNING THAT IF NEW SYRIAN INITIATIVE NOT TREATED SERIOUSLY BY LEBANESE PARTIES, SETTLEMENT EFFORTS WILL BE IMMOBILIZED.

9. COMMENT: COLUMNIST'S ASSERTION THAT SARKIS VISIT WAS CULMINATION OF SERIES OF CONTACTS HELD BY DAMASCUS WITH LEBANESE AND PALESTINIANS IS FIRST PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT HERE THAT THESE TALKS HAVE TAKEN PLACE. WHILE COLUMNIST DOWN-PLAYED USE OF FORCE IN LEBANON TO ACHIEVE VICTORY, HE LEFT UNCLEAR WHAT SYRIAN REACTION WOULD BE IF NEW INITIATIVE WERE OBSTRUCTED BY PARTIES TO CONFLICT.  
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